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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BOGOTA 001296

SIPDIS

USAID FOR ADMINISTRATOR NATSIOS, WHA FOR DAS SHAPIRO, NSC
FOR SENIOR DIRECTOR SHANNON

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - (ADD ADDRESSEE)

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SUBJECT: PRESIDENT URIBE MEETS WITH USAID ADMINISTRATOR
NATSIOS AND OTHER USDEL MEMBERS TO INTERNATIONAL DONORS
CONFERENCE ON COLOMBIA

REF: BOGOTA 1070

Classified By: Ambassador William B. Wood for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: President Uribe expressed his gratitude for U.S. support of Colombia during his February 3 meeting with USAID Administrator Natsios, before the opening of the International Donors Conference on Colombia in Cartagena. In a wide ranging discussion, Uribe reviewed outstanding human rights cases stressing that he would not tolerate impunity in GOC public forces, reviewed the GOC draft law for truth, justice and reparations predicting that the Congress would adopt a new law by June, and discussed his expectations for the meeting scheduled later in the day with President Chavez.

Natsios congratulated Uribe on his own war on terrorism and expressed ongoing USG support for his efforts. He also encouraged Uribe to do more on human rights. Ambassador Wood, while reiterating the Secretary's remarks that reconciliation in Colombia was up to Colombians to decide, urged the GOC to reach consensus on a legal framework for the peace process to deal with those guilty of serious human rights crimes as soon as possible. During the discussion on Chavez, DAS Shapiro reiterated U.S. support for Colombia and underscored that all of Colombia's neighbors needed to cooperate in the fight against terrorism and not allow their territories to be used by narco-terrorists like the FARC. (Note: Uribe developed an inner-ear infection later in the morning following his opening address at the conference forcing him to cancel his trip to Caracas.) END SUMMARY

12. (C) On February 3, prior to the opening of the international donors conference on Colombia in Cartagena, USAID Administrator Natsios met with President Uribe for breakfast at Casa de Huespedes. The President was accompanied by Vice President Santos, Presidential Adviser Juan Lozano, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Camilo Reyes, Director of the Colombian Agency for International Cooperation Luis Alfonso Hoyos, Colombian Ambassador to the U.S. Luis Alberto Moreno, Director of Communications at Casa de Narino Jaime Bermudez, and representatives from the Defense and Interior/Justice ministries. Also present was Ramon Crespo Morles, head of the Fundacion Convergencia Civica Nacional and a personal friend of the president's who planned to accompany him to Caracas to meet Chavez. Administrator Natsios was accompanied by Ambassador Wood, WHA DAS Shapiro, USAID director for Colombia and polcouns (notetaker).

13. (C) Uribe opened by thanking Administrator Natsios and the rest of the USG for the steadfast support of Colombia. He underscored that the fight against narco-terrorism was a difficult one and that the GOC had experienced a setback on February 1 and 2 with FARC attacks in Narino and Putumayo departments. Nonetheless, he was determined to carry on. Natsios said Colombia's progress against narco-terrorism was impressive; the country was succeeding. He wondered early in the Uribe Administration whether the ambitious plans laid out by the president could be accomplished. Now he had stopped wondering and wished many more like Uribe were leading developing countries. President Bush, Secretary Rice and the USG would continue to support Colombia.

HUMAN RIGHTS

14. (C) Administrator Natsios expressed support for President Uribe's efforts to address impunity and other human rights concerns but underscored that more needed to be done. He asked for a status report on the Mapiripan, Cajamarca, Guaitarilla and Arauca cases. Ambassador Wood added that the U.S. needed movement on these cases for the upcoming certification which would release \$32.5 million in assistance. Uribe said that the Minister of Defense was working on these cases. He referred to the ongoing trial of

retired general Jaime Uscategui for his alleged inaction on the Mapiripan case. He noted that the case goes back to 1997, five years before his administration began. On Cajamarca, he said there were no doubts. It was an accident that resulted in unfortunate civilian casualties by the armed forces. On Guaitarilla, he remained upset and disappointed with the police and hoped that the final investigation would clarify the matter. On Arauca, the soldiers who committed the crime were now in jail. Uribe stressed that he has repeatedly made it clear to the armed forces that he will not tolerate impunity.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR PARA DEMOBILIZATION

15. (C) Uribe raised the status of the GOC draft law for truth, justice and reparations. He planned to make four points about it in his opening remarks at the conference: (1) timing -- recent demobilizations had established a momentum and a track record that made it the right time to adopt a credible legal framework; (2) equilibrium -- there had to be a balance between justice and peace and the GOC draft had such a balance; (3) universality -- the law was designed to apply to paramilitaries and guerrillas alike; and (4) improving on past processes -- unlike past GOC peace initiatives, the draft law would deal with the issue of impunity. Uribe reiterated that, with 11,000 individuals demobilized, including more than 6,000 paramilitaries, a genuine peace process was underway making it the right moment to advance a credible legal framework. The need for a balance between justice and peace was important and that, unlike in the past, the GOC would not accept impunity in the name of peace. On the question of universality, he said the same framework had to apply to both the paramilitaries and the guerrillas. This was important because certain members of Congress would be inclined to be easier on the FARC and ELN if or when they demobilized. He stressed that his administration would make every effort to reach consensus with sponsors of the other drafts, and predicted that a law would be adopted by Congress before the session ends in June.

16. (C) DAS Shapiro inquired whether the GOC and the coalition of Senators from different parties led by Rafael Pardo could reach agreement. Uribe responded that Minister of Interior and Justice Sabas Pretelt had informed him that an agreement was reached two to three nights before but then the Pardo Group returned to the table to say that a few of its members from the Liberal and Polo Democratico parties could not agree. Subsequent signals from the negotiators suggested that an agreement was not yet firm but Uribe insisted he would circulate the GOC text on February 8 regardless. Congress would then have three versions of the bill to deal with. Vice President Santos noted that there would be much political posturing between now and then.

17. (C) Ambassador Wood said that the U.S. was trying hard not to express its views publicly on what should be in the law. The Secretary had said, when she was National Security Adviser, that reconciliation in Colombia was up to Colombians to decide. Nonetheless, expectations were high and the sooner the executive and legislative branches reached consensus on a draft law, the better. Uribe reiterated his seriousness about reaching consensus as soon as possible and his intention to follow the process closely, step by step. Administrator Natsios thanked Uribe for his commitment to

seeing the law through and reiterated the U.S. point of view that micro-managing the process from abroad, as certain NGOs and European countries wanted to do, was counterproductive. It was up to Colombians to decide how best to deliver peace in their own country.

MEETING WITH CHAVEZ

18. (C) (Note: Uribe was scheduled to meet with Chavez in Caracas later in the day. An inner-ear infection that emerged several hours later forced him to postpone his trip to Caracas and his Feb. 7-11 trip to Madrid, Paris and Brussels.) Uribe expected his meeting with Chavez to be difficult. He was determined not to pre-judge the outcome of the Caracas meeting but acknowledged that Chavez operated on a double standard: he behaved one way in private and another way in public. Uribe also worried about all the oil money Chavez had at his disposal. To prevent "complicated discussions of sovereignty," Uribe said he would insist that the two governments cooperate on fighting terrorism. Without such cooperation, more Granda-like incidents would occur. If Chavez brought the U.S. into the discussion, Uribe planned to respond that the U.S. was Colombia's ally and friend whose help had been genuine and concrete rather than just rhetoric, and that all his neighbors should follow the example. Uribe

expressed irritation at a recent public statement by Chavez that Colombia was producing guerrillas because it had a market economy. Uribe said he was going to ask a journalist to plant a question (for the first time, he claimed) about the remark in the news conference so he could respond to Chavez. He was not going to tolerate criticism of Colombia's economic model. Matsios reiterated that Uribe was on the right path and using exactly the right model. It was Chavez who had it wrong. The absence of true free markets contributed to the growth of guerrilla movements.

9. (C) DAS Shapiro added that Uribe could continue to count on U.S. support and that all Colombia's neighbors needed to cooperate in the fight against terrorism. No nation should allow its territory to be used by guerrilla groups. The GOC should seek all available measures, such as drawing on the OAS resolution that followed the 2003 Nogal bombing, to secure such commitments from its neighbors.

10. (C) Uribe reiterated his gratitude for U.S. support on the Colombian-Venezuela matter and insisted that he would not downplay it in his dealings with regional interlocutors. In that regard, he raised Fidel Castro, noting his help with Chavez. Uribe insisted that Castro "showed a real interest in solving the problem." That said, he also continued to be clear with Castro regarding the case of narco-trafficker Hernando Gomez Bustamante (aka "Rasguno") whom the Cubans had detained and Castro agreed to extradite to Colombia on the condition that he not be extradited to the U.S. Uribe said he refused to accept Castro's deal, telling the Cuban that he would not back away from his commitment to the U.S. on extraditions. Hence, said Uribe, the Cubans decided to commence legal proceedings against Rasguno in Cuba. Uribe also noted Castro's help in the past with the ELN, which had produced some movement.

WOOD